

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 1026

By Senator Willis

[Introduced February 10, 2026; referred
to the Committee on the Judiciary]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new article,
 2 designated §61-17-1, establishing the crime of disturbing a lawful meeting; and
 3 establishing penalties.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 17. DISTURBING A LAWFUL MEETING.

§61-17-1. Disturbing a lawful meeting.

1 (a) No person, with purpose to prevent or disrupt a lawful meeting, procession, or
 2 gathering, shall do either of the following:

3 (1) Do any act which obstructs or interferes with the due conduct of such meeting,
 4 procession, or gathering; or

5 (2) Make any utterance, gesture, or display which outrages the sensibilities of the group.

6 (b) Whoever violates this section is guilty of disturbing a lawful meeting. Except as
 7 otherwise provided in this division, disturbing a lawful meeting is a misdemeanor. Disturbing a
 8 lawful meeting is a felony if either of the following applies:

9 (1) The violation is committed with the intent to disturb or disquiet any assemblage of
 10 people met for religious worship at a tax-exempt place of worship, regardless of whether the
 11 conduct is within the place at which the assemblage is held or is on the property on which that
 12 place is located and disturbs the order and solemnity of the assemblage.

13 (2) The violation is committed with the intent to prevent, disrupt, or interfere with a virtual
 14 meeting or gathering of people for religious worship, through use of a computer, computer system,
 15 telecommunications device, or other electronic device or system, or in any other manner.

16 (c) As used in this section: (1) "Computer," "computer system," and "telecommunications
 17 device" have the same meanings as in §61-3C-3, §61-3C-14A, and §17C-14-15 of this code.

18 (2) "Virtual meeting or gathering" means a meeting or gathering by interactive video
 19 conference or teleconference, or by a combination thereof.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to establish the crime of disturbing a lawful meeting, establishing penalties.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.